

Warrant officer accessions

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The career of an Army warrant officer is a challenging and rewarding one with as many intangible as tangible benefits. The U.S. Army warrant officer program provides a number of benefits to include world-class training and

education, higher pay, faster promotion potential, extended career opportunities, and challenging assignments.

USAREC Warrant Officer Branch Missions

The Warrant Officer Branch Missions, U.S. States Army Recruiting Command has the respon-

sibility to recruit highly qualified applicants to serve as Army warrant officers. This team consists of several warrant officers and a small number of enlisted recruiters who actively conduct warrant officer recruitment briefings around the globe.

Additionally, they receive and process every warrant officer application before passing it to the warrant officer boards section. Application processing includes receipt, quality assurance, and waiver processing. Once the packet is presented to the boards branch, a copy is sent to the proponent.

The Warrant Officer Branch Missions also maintains the USAREC's Warrant Officer Recruiting Information Web Site (<http://www.usarec.army.mil/hq/warrant/index.htm>). This website offers a one-stop shop for information about Army warrant officer recruiting.

Branch Warrant Officer Personnel Developers (Proponent Managers)

Each Army branch that includes warrant officers has the added responsibility to establish the technical prerequisites for each warrant officer military occupational specialty. These prerequisites are submitted to USAREC and posted to the above website. They are also used as the basis of qualification for warrant officer accessions applicants. Personnel developers review every warrant officer accessions packet for their branch and provide an official memorandum rating the applicant either qualified to compete on a warrant officer accessions board for the specified warrant officer MOS or not qualified due to one



Photo by Larry Edmond

CW5 Todd M. Boudreau, Regimental chief warrant officer, provides program information to potential warrant officers during a recruiting session February 2011 in the Signal Towers at Fort Gordon, Ga.

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or more deficiencies. Every deficiency is identified on this memorandum and a copy is returned to the applicant so corrections may be made, if possible. Finally, if the packet contains a waiver request for a general prerequisite, the branch makes a recommendation for or against approval based on the needs of the Army and mitigating circumstances specific to the applicant and/or MOS.

The Process

The warrant officer accessions process is very similar to that used to access branch officers. Candidates assemble an accessions packet which contains specific information used to assess the candidate's qualifications and provide accessions board members adequate information on which to conduct a best-qualified board. Board packets typically include a number of required documents along with supporting documentation. Required documents include:

1. USAREC Application Checklist
 2. DA Form 61 (Application for Appointment)
 3. Letters of Recommendation
 4. Resume
 5. ERB (Enlisted Record Brief)
 6. OMPF (Last 10 years of NCOERS and/or AERs in order from newest to oldest)
 7. College Transcripts (if applicable and required)
 8. DA Form 6256 (AFAST Form from Test Center for MOS 153A only)
 9. Official Photo
- Typical supporting documentation includes:
10. Memorandum from security manager indicating security clearance
 11. Physical
 12. DA Form 160-R (Application for Active Duty)
 13. Statement of Understanding
 14. Waivers (e.g., Moral, Age, AFS, APFT, and Branch Prerequisite)
 15. Conditional Release (Reserves & Other Services)

The approval authority for moral waivers is Human Resources Command, for age and AFS waivers is DA G1, for APFT waivers is DA G3, and for branch specific prerequisite waivers is the applicable proponent.

Letters of recommendation must not be older than 12 months. For most applicants, three LORs are required: (1) an LOR from the applicant's current Company Commander (or first UCMJ level), (2) an LOR from the applicant's current Battalion Commander (or second UCMJ level), and (3) an LOR from a branch senior warrant officer (CW3 to CW5); not all branched require this third LOR (Signal does not). Although a letter from a senior Signal warrant officer is not required, it will add weight to the overall strength of the packet. In its place, and of much greater value, is a letter from an IT professional (e.g., S6, communications GS-13, or even a senior Signal

warrant officer), with personal knowledge of the applicant's technical skills and leadership potential.

Additionally, though not a requirement nor a prerequisite, awards and the following certification also provide great weight to the overall strength of the packet and should be cited in the resume and included in the packet: MCSA, CCNA, MCSE, CCNP, CCSP, CCIE, and the various Information Assurance and Computer Network Defense certifications (e.g., Net+, Sec+, CISSP, etc.).

The Prerequisites

Prerequisites fall into two categories: (1) those every candidate must meet and (2) those the specific branch establishes. Branches may also list mandatory and preferred prerequisites.

In general, there are ten general prerequisites every warrant officer applicant must meet in order to compete on a warrant officer accessions board. Some prerequisites may be waived, and others may not. These prerequisites include:

1. U.S. Citizenship (No Waivers)
2. GT score of 110 or higher (No Waivers)
3. High school graduate or have a GED (No Waivers)
4. Secret security clearance (Interim acceptable for application)
5. Pass the standard 3-event APFT (Can apply for waiver)
6. Meet height/weight standards (No Waivers)
7. Pass appointment physical (Class 1A flight physical for 153A)
8. Have 12 months remaining on current enlistment contract
9. Have less than 12 years AFS at the time of submission (Can apply for waiver)
10. Be between the ages of 18 and 46 (33 for 153A)

Signal specific mandatory prerequisites include:

1. SGT (E5) or above (May be waived for USAR or ARNG Soldiers)
2. A minimum of 36 months of rated time documented in NCOERS (May be waived for USAR or ARNG Soldiers when Soldier's civilian employment includes verifiable leadership/managerial responsibilities)
3. Four years of documented practical experience in the tasks and skills specified for each MOS on the USAREC website noted above
4. A minimum of 6 SH of college level English (neither speech nor public speaking courses meet this requirement) from an accredited academic institution; successful completion of the CLEP general examination in English or an Associate degree or higher (when the preponderance of college credit

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is from college instruction vice credited experience) are the only acceptable alternatives

Signal specific preferred prerequisites include:

1. Advanced Leader Course (BN-COC) graduate
2. Attain 12th grade equivalency on the Reading Grade Level portion (vocabulary and comprehension) of the Test of Adult Basic Education-A (TABE-A, or TABE-D)
3. Sec+ certified

Prerequisite waivers are mostly based on the needs of the Army; if a branch has difficulty meeting its accessions mission, a waiver is more likely to be approved than a branch that has more than adequate fully qualified applicants. Signal historically falls into the latter category.

Regarding APFT Waivers, the revised AR 350-1 (dated 18 Dec 09 with an effective date of 18 Jan 10) paragraph 3-12, i(3) states:

Candidates enrolling in WOCS or OCS must pass the standard three-event APFT as an enrollment requirement; the alternate APFT is only authorized with HQDA, DCS, G-3/5/7 approval. The walk event on the alternate APFT is the only authorized alternate event used as an enrollment requirement. The Soldier must also be able to walk the 6.2 mile ruck march for WOCS or the 12 plus miles for OCS with 48 lbs. or more in their rucksack within school time parameters. If a Soldier enrolling in WOCS or OCS fails the initial APFT, the Soldier will be denied enrollment but allowed one retest with a subsequent class. Soldiers failing the second APFT will be considered ineligible for enrollment and must reapply for OCS or WOCS selection.

Accordingly, the only APFT waiver requests that are eligible for consideration are those requesting a waiver for the walk event; the push up and sit up

events cannot be waived under these guidelines.

To date, mandatory Signal prerequisites have not been waived; applicants must meet each of these prerequisites to be qualified to compete on a selection board. These prerequisites have been established to ensure only the best qualified Noncommissioned Officer applicants compete for the limited number of warrant officer positions. Additionally, they ensure applicants have the requisite background and Signal experience required to successfully pass the applicable MOS producing Warrant Officer Basic Course. Our current Signal WOBC are extremely academically challenging. They are between 25 and 32 weeks long and are, for all but one training day, focus entirely on complex information technology solutions. Students require a broad and solid base of IT knowledge, skills, abilities, and experiences to be successful.

Non-Army personnel may also

apply. The first hurdle is to ensure the 110 GT score has been met.

Air Force, Navy, and Coast Guard Service members who would like to get their scores converted need to first ensure that the individual qualifies with an Army GT of 110. If the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery or Armed Forces Classification Test or in-service ASVAB was administered prior to 1 July 2004, Air Force members need a minimum General (G) score of 64 while Navy and Coast Guard Service members must combine their Arithmetic Reasoning (AR) and Verbal (VE) and have a minimum combined score of 109. If the ASVAB or AFCT was administered after 1 July 2004, Air Force members need a minimum General (G) score of 70 while Navy and Coast Guard service members must combine their Arithmetic Reasoning (AR) and Verbal (VE) and have a minimum combined score of 111. Marines needing ASVAB scores converted must contact: HQMC M&RA MPP-50 Testing.



Soldiers selected into the Signal Warrant Officer Corps enjoy world-class training on par with advanced civilian industrial standards.

The USAREC website contains all of the information required to include mailing addresses for verification of the above prerequisite as well as how to secure a memorandum granting approval of separation from the service member's current service contingent upon selection into the warrant officer program, taking the Army 3-event physical fitness test, etc.

Finally, it is significant to note that since Soldiers are formally separated from the Army and subsequently conditionally appointed as a WO1 upon graduation from the WOCS, students who fail to pass the WOBC are administratively separated from the Army. If they desire to continue to serve in the Army, they must find an Army recruiter and may enlist again back into the Army – under the needs of the Army; there is no guarantee nor should there be any expectation that an individual will be enlisted back into the Signal Regiment, into their past MOS, nor in their last enlisted grade.

Board Procedures

Once an application packet has successfully made it through the review process and has been found qualified to appear before an accessions board, it is logged and maintained by the warrant officer boards section of USAREC. Not all MOS are boarded every month; larger MOS are boarded more often than MOS of smaller population. Signal accessions packets are boarded three times a year; January, May, and September.

Board members are senior warrant officers of the same branch from which packets are being boarded. Members receive several briefings and even conduct a practice board; this board is run as a secretariat Department of the Army promotion board and maintains the same standard of credibility as such. During the board, members are only able to view one packet at a time; the packet must be voted for the member to move on to the next packet. Voting is conducted similar to a promotion board in that members take a “whole Soldier” approach and vote 0-6 with the ability to add a plus (+) or minus (-) for further effect.

Once an entire MOS has been boarded, the warrant officer boards section establishes a numerical Order-of-Merit List (OML). This OML is used to feed one of three categories: (1) Fully Qualified – Selected (FQ-S) individuals are those who made the selection quota and will be processed into the Warrant Officer Program, (2) Fully Qualified – Not Selected (FQ-NS) individuals are those who were not selected on their first look by a selection board, and (3) Not Competitive – Not Selected (NC-NS) individuals are those who were not selected on their second look by a selection board.

FQ-S individuals usually receive orders to attend the Warrant Officer Candidate School approximately four to six months after their selection; these individuals must have a current qualified appointment physical (with no

disqualifying medical condition IAW AR 40-501) and security clearance verification when they report to Fort Rucker for WOCS. FQ-NS individuals are automatically boarded by the next warrant officer candidate selection board which considers their requested warrant officer MOS; such individuals are encouraged to update their application as appropriate. NC-NS individuals have their application returned to the current address listed in block #19 on the DA Form 61 and may not reapply for one year from the date on their DA Form 61 (Application for Appointment), page 3, block 42.

After Selection

Once a Soldier is selected on an Army warrant officer selection board, one more significant decision must be made before accepting this great honor. It is expected that all WO1s be assigned to a deploying unit, even if a Soldier has a number of deployments as an enlisted Soldier. Muddy boots assignments and boots-on-ground time as a warrant officer is important to solidify the training received at the Warrant Officer Basic Course as well as to establish credibility. I recommend that every selected Soldier think this through and discuss it with their family. If this is going to be a problem it is better identified up-front.

Many candidates spend over \$1,000 purchasing clothing items that they already own. If your uniform items are still serviceable do not feel that you have to replace them. However, if they are serviceable but do not fit properly, you must have clothing that is sized appropriately. There are two packing lists. One that has mandatory clothing items and another that has optional items. You must have everything on the mandatory items list. This should be your entire initial issue. Do not bring extra unless authorized on the list. If it specifies a color, it must be that color (i.e. white underwear).

On the optional items list you should only bring those things that will make you more comfortable. Many candidates suggest bringing a Camel Back that will be used for the six-day field exercise, long underwear for winter months, and females should bring pumps for the reception. There is also a list of mandatory items that includes toiletries and office supplies. Keep toiletries to a minimum to avoid cluttering your personal security area. You may want to wait on office supplies until you arrive at Fort Rucker, Ala. Previous students may have left behind many of the items that you will need such as index cards, one-inch rings, medical tape, two-sided tape, etc. You can always purchase them here at Clothing Sales or the Shoppette if there are no extras in the class admin room.

The next challenge is to prepare for and successfully complete the Warrant Officer Candidate School. This course provides a very important part of our

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warrant officers' training that ensures each has the basic understanding of what is expected of an Army officer.

A great link with information that prepares a potential warrant officer is <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/WOCC/wocs.asp>. Note that some Distributive Learning is required prior to WOCS attendance. Once a Soldier has enrolled in ATRRS for Course 911-09W, the Soldier must access the training at <https://www.bb.wood.army.mil> by logging in with their AKO short name and password. Ensure you plan accordingly. Failure to complete the dL portion of WOCS will result in a delay in start date or dismissal from the course. Note also that there is an electronic copy of the WOC SOP on the dL site. There are many procedures


that must be followed at WOCS that are covered in the SOP. The more one knows, the easier the transition. Many mistakes candidates make while in WOCS are covered in the WOC SOP.

After successful completion of WOCS, the newly (though conditionally) appointed WO1 will be welcomed to Fort Gordon, Ga., the home of the Signal Regiment, for technical training in the appropriate WOBC. Students are challenged to learn many things that will prepare them for their first assignment. The recommended link for use in preparation for WOBC is: <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/133249>.

We ask that Soldiers be patient for 60 to 90 days to allow us to get schedules for WOCS and WOBC completed. If a Soldier has not heard from the Signal Regiment at the end of 90 days, the Soldier

should contact the Regimental chief warrant officer.

Conclusion

This provides a brief synopsis of the Army Warrant Officer Accessions Program with special emphasis on Signal. The Army Warrant Officer Program not only provides the Army with premier technical officers who are "self aware and adaptive technical experts, combat leaders, trainers, and advisors," but it also provides enlisted Soldiers who are more inclined to follow such a path the opportunity to perform their core technical duties longer, join a small elite corps of professionals who want to make a difference, who want to advance their careers, who want to stay in their career fields, who want better retirement pay for family, and who have the technical capabilities to do more. 

ACRONYM QuickScan

AER – Academic Evaluation Report
AFCT – Armed Forces Classification Test
AFS – Active Federal Service
ALC – Advanced Leaders Course
APFT – Army Physical Fitness Test
ARNG – Army National Guard
ASVAB – Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery
BNCOC – Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course
CCIE – Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert
CCNA – Cisco Certified Network Associate
CCNP – Cisco Certified Network Professional
CCSP – Cisco Certified Security Professional
CISSP – Certified Information Systems Security Professional
CLEP – College Level Examination Program
DL – Distributive Learning
ERB – Enlisted Record Brief
FQ-NS – Fully Qualified – Not Selected
FQ-S – Fully Qualified – Selected
GED – General Educational Development
GT – General Technical
HQDA, DCS – Headquarters Department of the Army, Deputy Chief of Staff
IAW – In Accordance With

IT – Information Technology
LOR – Letters of Recommendation
MCSA – Microsoft Certified Administrator
MCSE – Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer
MOS – Military Occupational Specialty
NC-NS – Not Competitive – Not Selected
NCOER – Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report
Net+ – CompTIA Network+ Certification
OCS – Officer Candidate School
OML – Order-of-Merit List
OMPF – Official Military Personnel File
PSA – Personal Security Area
Sec+ – CompTIA Security+ Certification
SOP – Standard Operating Procedures
TABE – Test of Adult Basic Education
WOCS – Warrant Officer Candidate School
UCMJ – Uniform Code of military Justice
USAR – United States Army Reserve
USAREC – United States Army Recruiting Command
WO1 – Warrant Officer 1
WOBC – Warrant Officer Basic Course
WOC – Warrant Officer Candidate
WOCS – Warrant Officer Candidate School